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Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: United Nations system coordination and collaboration related to youth

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with resolution 47/1 of the Commission for Social Development. It describes the mechanisms for coordination and collaboration of relevant United Nations entities in their work related to youth. The report highlights examples of effective United Nations system collaboration on youth at the global, regional and country levels and discusses steps to further strengthen coordination among relevant United Nations entities.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 47/1,[1] the Commission for Social Development requested the Secretary-General to provide to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, through the Commission for Social Development at its forty-ninth session, a comprehensive report on the coordination and collaboration of relevant United Nations entities in their work related to youth.

2. The present report, which responds to this request, is itself an example of inter-agency collaboration. It is based on inputs received from the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. The report highlights selected examples of effective collaboration on youth at the global, regional and country levels and briefly discusses steps to further increase coordination among relevant United Nations entities. While the scope of this report precludes an exhaustive list of inter-agency activities, particularly at the country level, the examples chosen emphasize the range of ongoing inter-agency activities and highlight the success factors for effective collaboration.

3. The next section of the report begins with an overview of prominent examples of coordination and collaboration taking place within the United Nations system at the global level, starting with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. Successful instances of institutionalized inter-agency collaboration are also highlighted in this section of the report, along with other forms of collaboration between United Nations entities, civil society organizations and other relevant partners. The third section reports on coordination and collaboration at the regional level and presents information on activities that have been undertaken at the country level. Policy recommendations are provided in the concluding part of the report.

II. Coordination and collaboration at the global level

A. United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

4. The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is the main mechanism of cooperation on matters related to youth development within the United Nations system. The Network consists of United Nations entities whose work is relevant to youth. Formal terms of reference for the Network were drawn up and adopted in early 2010 at a meeting of 17 United Nations entities working in the field of youth. The terms of reference define the purpose and objectives of the Network and outline its methods of operation and the parameters of its membership.

5. The aim of the Network is to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations work in youth development at the global, regional and country levels. This is achieved by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant United Nations entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates.

6. The Network also contributes to increasing the understanding and visibility of the United Nations system's work on youth development through joint advocacy

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 6* (E/2009/26-E/CN.5/2009/9), chap. I, sect. D.

initiatives. It also facilitates and supports youth participation within the United Nations system, through its programmes and initiatives, at all levels.

7. The Network has two co-chairs. The permanent co-chair is the United Nations Programme on Youth of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. The second co-chair is selected by the members and rotates on an annual basis. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) served as the co-chair for period March 2010-February 2011.

8. The Network holds regular meetings at United Nations Headquarters, with telephone/video conferencing to other duty stations. A face-to-face meeting of the entities' representatives is held on an annual basis and, whenever possible, in the context of another youth-related meeting. Experts and organizations, in particular youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks, whose knowledge may contribute to the Network's activities, may be invited to its meetings by the co-chairs, after consultation with other members of the Network.

9. In early 2010, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development developed the United Nations Framework Approach for the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding in order to guide collective efforts during the Year. The United Nations system's approach for the Year focuses on three key areas: (a) increasing commitment and investment in youth; (b) increasing youth participation and partnerships; (c) increasing intercultural understanding among youth. Moreover, members of the Network have developed a series of fact sheets on key issues of relevance to youth for the International Year.[2]

10. The Inter-Agency Network also organized the global launch of the Year on 12 August 2010 at United Nations Headquarters. The launch celebrated young people's contribution to development and peace. On that occasion, the principals of 28 entities of the Network issued a joint statement emphasizing their willingness to work together to tackle the multifaceted challenges facing young people. In addition to the global launch event, several entities organized joint launch activities together with regional United Nations information centres in their respective duty stations.

11. In the lead-up to the world youth conference called for by the General Assembly as the highlight of the Youth, the Inter-agency Network is organizing a series of briefings on major issues of relevance to the theme of the Year, to be held at United Nations Headquarters.

12. A number of future joint activities are also planned for the Network, including a report on youth civic engagement, a joint follow-up mechanism of key youth events, a global database of national youth policies and the identification and development of relevant youth indicators.

13. Other proposals for future collaboration include increased interregional sharing of data and exchange of good practices and relevant youth development experiences. Greater technical cooperation with Governments as well as research in areas such as emerging youth subcultures, changes in political participation of young generations and new patterns of inclusion and communication have also been suggested.

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[2] http://social.un.org/youthyear/launch.html#fact.

14. In support of the activities of the Inter-Agency Network, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA) established, in September 2010, a working group of its social development cluster to develop joint research initiatives focused on youth development.[3] The working group is tasked with: (a) initiating a stocktaking of youth-focused research, programmes and activities across the United Nations system; (b) developing a long-term research strategy on youth development; and preparing guidelines on how to engage youth.

B. Other institutionalized inter-agency collaboration

15. In some cases, inter-agency collaboration has been institutionalized through the creation of specific long-term structures to serve as official secretariats to facilitate such collaboration. Two examples of such institutionalized inter-agency collaboration in the area of youth are the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Youth Employment Network (YEN).

UNAIDS

16. Empowering young people to protect themselves from HIV is a priority of UNAIDS. In particular, UNAIDS seeks a 30 per cent reduction in new HIV infections among young people (15- to 24-year-olds) by 2015 through the provision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive information, skills, services and commodities, in a safe and supportive environment tailored to the specific country and epidemic context. In order to achieve this goal, UNAIDS aims to increase young people's comprehensive knowledge of HIV, use of condoms and use of HIV testing and counselling services. Within the overall collaborative framework of UNAIDS, a number of inter-agency task teams, such as the task team on HIV and young people and the task team on education, promote further inter-agency collaboration related to youth.

17. The inter-agency task team on HIV and young people was created in 2001 to support an accelerated, harmonized and expanded global, regional and country-level response to the need to increase young people's utilization of HIV services. Membership includes the UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsors, along with youth networks/associations, donors, civil society, and research institutions. It is convened by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as a lead agency on HIV and young people, as agreed in the UNAIDS technical division of labour.

18. The task team on education was created in 2002 to promote accelerated and improved education-sector responses to HIV and to support global and country-level actions. Membership includes the UNAIDS co-sponsors, bilateral agencies, private foundations and civil society partners supporting education-sector responses to HIV. It is convened by UNESCO, as the lead agency on HIV and young people in educational institutions.

19. Over the years, inter-agency task teams have produced many guidelines and tools aimed at supporting and strengthening the implementation of HIV programmes for young people. A recent output of the task team on HIV and young people includes detailed research on good practices in ongoing coordination and joint

[3] EC-ESA aims to foster coherence and common approaches among United Nations entities engaged in normative, analytical and technical work in the economic and social field.

programming on HIV and young people. The research highlights the need for, and the benefits of, coordination and joint programming on HIV and young people at the country level through case studies of good practices.[4]

Youth Employment Network

20. The Youth Employment Network (YEN) is another example of an institutionalized inter-agency cooperation mechanism on youth. YEN is a partnership between the United Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, set up in the wake of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations to find new and durable solutions to the youth employment challenge. The Network is a global platform whose goal is to prioritize youth employment on the development agenda and to exchange knowledge on effective policies and programmes to improve employment opportunities for youth. It focuses on policy advice, innovative pilot projects, knowledge-sharing and brokering partnerships. YEN makes use of its core agency partners' know-how and resources and ensures youth participation in delivering its services. YEN is managed by a permanent secretariat hosted by ILO offices in Geneva, Dakar and Dar es Salaam.

21. One of the key initiatives of YEN is its lead country network, composed of policymakers from 19 countries who have committed to prioritizing youth employment on their national policy agenda and have agreed to work towards meeting targets on youth employment. Other main activities include: the Youth-to-Youth Fund, which supports youth-led employment-generation projects; the YEN evaluation clinics, which provide technical and financial support to policymakers and practitioners to help them conduct rigorous evaluations of their youth employment programmes and policies, and the so-called Marketplace, an online space for the global youth employment community to exchange or offer innovative ideas, good practices, expertise and advice.

C. Other forms of inter-agency collaboration at the global level

22. Below are a few examples of the many inter-agency task forces or working groups which address the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force

23. In November 2007, the United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force was convened in response to the need for a clear inter-agency programming framework specifically addressing the most marginalized and disadvantaged adolescent girls. The objective of the Task Force is to support the United Nations system in ensuring that programmes of cooperation with Governments and civil society raise awareness of the situation of the most marginalized and disadvantaged adolescent girls and prescribe practical action to fulfil their rights. Co-chaired by UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Task Force includes UNESCO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the World Health Organization

[4] See UNFPA, UNAIDS and BBC World Service Trust (2010), Good Practice in Joint Programmes and Ongoing Coordination on HIV and Young People. 15 Nominated Programmes as well as UNFPA, UNAIDS and BBC World Service Trust (2010), Good Practice in Joint Programmes and Ongoing Coordination on HIV and Young People. Three Selected Good Practice Programmes.

(WHO) and ILO and supports collaboration at the country level with Government ministries, civil society organizations and women's and girls' networks.

24. In 2010, at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Adolescent Girls Task Force launched the United Nations Joint Statement on Adolescent Girls, in which the heads of all six participating agencies pledged to intensify their efforts to fulfil the human rights of adolescent girls with a particular emphasis on those hardest to reach. The Joint Statement identifies five strategic areas: education, health, prevention of violence, leadership development and data. A joint programming framework to roll out the work in these five areas at country level is currently under development.

Inter-agency cooperation on climate change and sustainable development

25. The United Nations Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth, and Climate Change was created in October 2008 under the auspices of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The aim of the Initiative is to share information among interested United Nations agencies on their activities engaging children and youth on climate change issues at the national, regional and global levels. The Initiative also allows participating agencies to share plans for events on child and youth issues that are to be organized at meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention and to facilitate a coordinated United Nations effort to that effect.

26. In this context, the Joint Framework Initiative implemented a series of activities at recent sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP). It also published *Growing Together in a Changing Climate: The United Nations, Young People, and Climate Change*, which contains information on some of the many climate change initiatives — projects, campaigns, educational tools, websites and publications — produced by the United Nations and young people. Moreover, it coordinated the publication of the brochure "Youth participation in the UNFCCC negotiation process", which aims to inform Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and young people on mechanisms for youth participation at the sessions of COP.

27. The increased interest in youth and climate change has also led to other forms of cooperation among United Nations entities. In the lead-up to COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized the Tunza International Children and Youth Conference on Climate Change in Daejeon, Republic of Korea, which was attended by 800 children and youth. The Conference was supported by UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO and the UNFCCC secretariat and led to a youth statement on the Copenhagen process.[5]

28. In cooperation with other United Nations entities, notably WHO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNEP also organized regional seminars and workshops in all regions of the world to engage young people and their networks on climate change- and biodiversity-related issues. UNEP has also taken advantage of an online platform developed by UNICEF which allows children and youth globally to interact and

[5] www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=article_s&id_article=1570.

have online discussions on topics of importance to them, including environmental issues. The engagement of young people to commemorate major United Nations environment days, such as World Environment Day (5 June) and the International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May), also relies heavily on the UNICEF social networking platform.[6]

29. Through the youthXchange programme, UNEP and UNESCO engage young people all over the world by providing information on ways of adopting sustainable consumption habits and practices, as well as with awareness-raising campaigns, communication and education. The programme reaches out to youth through a network of diverse partners including non-governmental organizations, youth groups, education centres, schools and public institutions and is present in 45 countries in all regions of the world. A special youthXchange programme guidebook on climate change is also being developed with the objective of inspiring young people to take action and address climate change through sustainable lifestyle choices.

30. FAO and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, have published an educational package on biodiversity. It includes a comprehensive youth guide covering all aspects of biodiversity and current global biodiversity challenges, and a biodiversity challenge badge that encourages young people to learn about and to take practical actions supporting biodiversity in their communities.

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

31. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies was founded in 2000 with the aim of improving inter-agency communication and collaboration in the provisions of education opportunities and services in emergency and post-crisis contexts.[7] The current steering group is composed of UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and the World Bank in equal partnership with CARE International, ChildFund International, the International Rescue Committee, International Save the Children Alliance, Open Society Institute and Refugee Education Trust.

Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism

32. The Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism is an open-ended network with multi-stakeholder participation, including the United Nations World Tourism Organization, ILO and UNICEF.[8] The Task Force is focused on the prevention of all forms of exploitation of children and adolescents in the tourism sector, such as sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking. The Task Force meetings, held annually at international travel and tourism fairs, serve as a platform for both the public and private tourism sectors, including civil society and the media, to exchange experiences and best practices, promote the adoption of professional codes of conduct and responsible practices, in line with the World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, as well as to disseminate awareness-raising materials and capacity-building tools.

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[6] www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_50646.html.

[7] www.ineesite.org/.

[8] www.unwto.org/protect_children/index.php?op=0.

33. The Task Force promotes and supports an international campaign with the slogan "Don't let child abuse travel" which was launched in November 2008.

III. Coordination and collaboration at the regional level

34. The following section presents the work of the United Nations from a regional perspective, focusing on Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia/Arab States. It describes existing regional mechanisms that are in place to facilitate coordination and coherence in the work of the United Nations and highlights a number of country projects, activities and partnerships.

A. Africa

Collaboration at the regional level

35. In Africa, as in other regions, the Regional Coordination Mechanism provides the overall framework for enhancing policy coherence and creating synergy and efficiency in the work of the United Nations at the regional and subregional levels. In May 2010, an education and youth sub-cluster was launched under the social and human development cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism. Its aim is to provide a platform for the coordination of United Nations support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme, particularly in the areas of education and youth development.

36. The education and youth sub-cluster is convened by UNESCO and supported by ECA, as secretariat of the social and human development cluster. The sub-cluster's mandate is to provide programmatic, technical and institutional support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programmes in the area of education and youth, including the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Plan of Action and the ratification and implementation of the African Union Youth Charter by member States.

37. The education and youth sub-cluster has contributed to the establishment of the African Youth Volunteer Corps programme, led by UNFPA in partnership with ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ECA, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO and the United Nations Volunteers programme. The African Youth Volunteer Corps programme aims at youth development through exchange of knowledge and experience among African youth in the various countries. It also aims to offer employment opportunities and instil a culture of public service in African youth.

38. The education and youth sub-cluster will extend its support to the planning, organization and evaluation of the future sessions of both the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union and the Conference of Ministers of Youth of the African Union. The sub-cluster will also work to facilitate the coordination and harmonization of the work of African institutions of higher education and will solicit support for the establishment of the Pan African University as well as a pan African youth institute. In addition, the sub-cluster aims at developing strategic partnerships with development organizations outside the United Nations that are active in the area of education.

Collaboration at the country level

39. A number of inter-agency programmes and projects implemented at the national level focus on promoting employment opportunities for youth. An example of one such activity is the Multi-stakeholder Programme for Productive and Decent Work for Youth in the Mano River Union countries, jointly developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, ILO, YEN and UNDP. It complements the Regional Programme for Social Cohesion and Employment Policies in West Africa developed by UNDP. The underlying principle of the partnership is to tap into each agency's expertise and maximize synergies stemming from inter-agency cooperation.

40. The programme focuses on three key lines of action: (a) the promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship among youth; (b) enhancing employability of young people; and (c) supporting expansion of existing youth-led employment-generating activities.

41. As a spin-off of the initial phase of the Mano River Union Multi-stakeholder Programme, UNIDO, together with UNICEF and YEN, have launched a nationwide programme in Guinea to develop youth-driven businesses, primarily in the area of waste management. The first year of the programme is funded from the Peacebuilding Fund. The programme aims at engaging over 10,000 young people, with special attention being paid to disadvantaged youth. It focuses on access to direct funding opportunities for youth social entrepreneurship, and coaching and training schemes. It is supported by an information technology-based communications platform so as to enhance youth participation and information sharing among all stakeholders.

B. Asia and the Pacific

Collaboration at the regional level

42. The United Nations Asia-Pacific Inter-agency Group on Youth, chaired by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, serves as the coordinating platform for youth-related matters in the United Nations system in the region. The Group comprises the United Nations and associated entities that undertake programmes of relevance to young people in the region, including FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF. The Group was formally established in 2010 to support the principles of Delivering as One.

43. The Inter-agency Group's terms of reference include supporting the regional implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, the Millennium Development Goals (as they pertain to youth) and other youth-relevant internationally agreed development goals. The Group is set to prepare a compilation of youth policies ranging from poverty alleviation to employment, health care and education and to develop a framework for sharing and disseminating information on innovative and good practices and lessons learned. The Group is planning a regional meeting involving youth organizations and other stakeholders in early 2011 to help coherently plan United Nations programmes related to youth.

Collaboration at the country level

44. In several countries in the Asia and Pacific region, United Nations specialized agencies have actively collaborated on youth issues. Programme coordinating groups have been established to allow agencies to collaborate on technical interventions, while thematic working groups have been created to enable cooperation on specific target group interventions.

45. Programme coordinating groups are often chaired by the country representative of one of the resident United Nations entities working on youth issues. Collaboration between funds, programmes and specialized agencies has been effective in the formulation of national youth strategies and in the implementation of national youth policies, as well as in the establishment of youth advisory panels and the organization of national youth conferences. It has ensured greater youth participation and inputs to United Nations programme design, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and has contributed to developing mechanisms for enhanced dialogue and information exchange between Governments, United Nations agencies, youth organizations and youth groups.

46. Examples of inter-agency collaboration in the area of youth can be found in a variety of countries in the region. For instance, in Mongolia, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP have been supporting the development of youth-friendly health centres. In Myanmar and Timor-Leste, UNFPA and UNICEF have been active in the development of youth-friendly information, education and communication materials on HIV/AIDS and adolescent sexual and reproductive health. In Nepal, the United Nations Country Team participated in a series of national advocacy forums and conducted an audit of the United Nations resident entities' understanding of and responsiveness to youth issues. In Pakistan, ILO, UNESCO and UNFPA have been working together with the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Labour and Education and young people in formulating concrete recommendations for developing a national implementation plan for youth development.

C. Europe

47. The number of youth-related country projects in Europe and in other developed countries is limited. However, two projects, in Albania and Serbia, are worth highlighting. In Albania, the Youth Migration, Reaping the Benefit and Mitigating the Risks programme is being implemented by ILO, IOM, UNDP and UNICEF, together with four different Government entities and public-private partnerships. Its goal is to improve decent work opportunities for youth and migration management through a revision of national strategies on youth, employment and migration.

48. In Serbia, the same four United Nations entities mentioned above carry out a project entitled Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration, in collaboration with seven governmental entities. The project aims at supporting national and local institutions in their efforts to increase youth employment, including among young Roma who have returned to the country. Both projects are implemented with financial support from the MDG Achievement Fund.

49. The country-level work is operated through joint programmes on youth, employment and migration. Currently, there are 14 such programmes being implemented with the support of United Nations country teams in Africa (the Sudan and Tunisia), Asia (China and the Philippines), South-East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey) and Latin America (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru). They involve partnerships at both country and local levels.

D. Latin America and the Caribbean

United Nations Development Group working group on youth

50. The Regional United Nations Development Group Team for Latin America and the Caribbean recently established a working group on youth as a follow-up to the World Youth Conference held in Léon, Guanajuato, Mexico in August 2010 and the regional pre-Conference for the Americas, held in Bahia, Brazil in May 2010. The working group is currently developing its terms of reference and programme of work.

Ibero-American cooperation system

51. Several entities of the United Nations system, including ECLAC, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA, have joined forces with the Secretariat to develop a multidisciplinary research agenda on youth. Other stakeholders include the European Commission, the German technical cooperation agency GTZ and the Ibero-American Youth Organization. A major outcome of this joint effort was the publication of a report on youth and social cohesion on the occasion of the Eighteenth Ibero-American Summit held in El Salvador in 2008.[9]

52. Data collection and research have also been conducted on various youth-related topics including adolescent pregnancy and motherhood and indigenous youth. A system of disaggregated indicators has been created to monitor the social and economic situation of youth in all countries of the region which are published online and accessible to all stakeholders.[10]

Inter-agency project on best practices in youth policies and programmes

53. The Best Practices project, coordinated by UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank, was supported by seven United Nations agencies and five intergovernmental organizations, with a total of 24 partners. The first phase of the project was devoted to preparing a review of best practices in youth policies and programmes in the region. The selection was reviewed at a high-level regional forum in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in 2009 which brought together policymakers, researchers, young experts and representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations from the region. The outcome of the project, which consists of a selection of best practices and policy recommendations, is in the process of being published by the Inter-American Development Bank and UNESCO. The success of the project has generated interest from United Nations partners who are exploring ways of carrying out a similar project at the global level.

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[9] *Juventud y cohesión social en Iberoamérica: Un modelo para armar.*

[10] This system of indicators can be found at http://sicj.cepal.org and www.iberostat.org.

Collaboration at a country level

54. In Costa Rica, a joint programme entitled Youth, Employment and Migration: a One-Stop Shop for Youth Employment was established in 2008 with the support of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP IOM, ILO, FAO and more than 20 national entities from Government agencies, the business and labour sector as well as civil society and youth organizations. The aim of the programme is to address youth unemployment, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, and to improve youth entrepreneurship and business opportunities for young people.

55. In Paraguay, UNICEF, ILO, UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNDP cooperate with 12 different governmental entities on a project entitled "Youth: economic capacities and opportunities for social inclusion". The project aims at increasing the skills and employment opportunities of young people in poverty through entrepreneurship, technical and employment training as well as through the provision of information to young migrant workers. The project also aims at generating greater respect for labour standards. In addition, the project has contributed to the creation of the Observatorio Nacional de Juventud (National Observatory for Young People).

E. Western Asia/Arab States

56. Collaboration between the Regional Director's Team and the United Nations Development Group Arab States/Middle East and North Africa Region culminated in the formulation of the regional Inter-Agency Strategic Action Plan on Young People for 2010 and 2011 to guide the United Nations entities' work on youth in the Arab region.

57. The Action Plan identifies six aspects of young people's development as key technical areas of intervention: health, education, protection, participation, employment and decent work, and emergencies. For each of these areas, concrete objectives and activities as well as lead agencies have been identified.

Example of collaboration at the country level

58. In Tunisia, IOM, UNDP, FAO, ILO and UNIDO, alongside governmental and non-governmental entities at the national and local levels are working together on the programme Engaging Tunisian Youth to Achieve the MDGs. The programme aims to create decent jobs for both skilled and unskilled young people.

IV. Benefits and challenges of inter-agency collaboration and lessons learned

A. Benefits of inter-agency collaboration

59. The experience of inter-agency collaboration on youth at the global, regional and country levels has demonstrated a number of important benefits. The coordinating mechanisms and working groups that have been established at various levels provide a forum to share information and knowledge, avoid duplication of initiatives and identify complementary expertise and potentials for synergies in delivering relevant outcomes. Sharing of contacts and pooling of networks and expertise has proven to be especially helpful. In particular, organizations with only a

global or regional headquarters have been able to benefit from the country networks of partner agencies. At the same time, the agencies themselves have benefited from improved access to intergovernmental processes that take place at the global or regional level.

60. Since the challenges facing young people are multifaceted, sectoral approaches are insufficient to improve the well-being of young people in a holistic manner. By combining efforts, United Nations entities are able to draw on their specific expertise, mandates and resources to ensure that youth issues are addressed in a comprehensive manner.

B. Challenges

61. Inter-agency collaboration on youth has not been without its challenges. Members of the United Nations system have different mandates and missions which do not always complement each other. United Nations organizations also operate with different financial mechanisms and procedures and have, for the most part, limited financial and human resources to allocate to coordination.

62. With the exception of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, no joint workplan has, to date, been adopted by the various inter-agency mechanisms. Rather, entities have focused on implementing their own workplans and have participated in inter-agency activities that were in line with previously existing, agency-specific workplans.

63. Programmes and projects involving a limited number of United Nations entities, especially at a country level, have been more successful than those involving a large number of partners. Evidence has shown that having a programme coordinator and a joint programme unit made up of all partners is conducive to joint programming.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

64. Collaboration within the United Nations system on youth-related matters has expanded significantly in recent years. This increased collaboration has resulted in the adoption of more strategic approaches to promoting youth development and, increasingly, joint programme delivery by the United Nations system. Yet, to fully reap the benefits of inter-agency coordination, more remains to be done.

65. **In view of the foregoing, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:**

(a) **To call upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to further increase coordination and collaboration in their work related to youth;**

(b) **To call upon the regional coordination mechanisms of the United Nations to adopt and/or implement regional inter-agency action plans in support of Member States' efforts to develop holistic and integrated youth policies based on the World Programme of Action;**

(c) **To call upon relevant organizations of the United Nations system to further develop inclusive and accessible mechanisms for youth participation in inter-agency initiatives on youth development.**